

The

MESSENGER



of OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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Number 7

THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA
(White Sisters)

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie to aid the White Fathers in Christianizing the Mohammedan and pagan women of Africa and through their means conquer the family and society. The Sisters cooperate with the White Fathers in all kinds of catechetical, medical and educational works in 143 missions scattered over the vast African Continent.

Though there are 1600 White Sisters, the number is far from being sufficient to cope with the present day needs of our missions. Sisters are needed to staff more catechetical classes, grammar, high and normal schools, as well as more hospitals, dispensaries, baby welfare centers, leprosariums, etc.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, as well as young girls without any special training, who feel called to devote their lives to foreign missionary work, would find ample scope for their zeal among the Africans.

The White Sisters receive their religious training and pronounce their vows in this country before leaving for the missions.

Any young girl who would like to become a White Sister, and thus attain her personal sanctification through active work for the evangelization of Africa, may apply to

Mother Superior
White Sisters' Training Center
R. R. 2, Belleville, Illinois

SEVERAL GOOD WAYS OF HELPING
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THE MOST REV. WILLIAM A. GRIFFIN, D.D.
Bishop of Trenton

The unexpected death of our Venerated Bishop threw a cloak of sadness over our community as we were preparing to celebrate the New Year.

The White Sisters owe a deep debt of gratitude to His Excellency. It was he who, when Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the Archdiocese of Newark, encouraged us to make known our missionary activities and to open a house in the States. Ever since, the good Bishop has been a loyal friend to the White Sisters.

Bishop Griffin's death is a great loss not only to our Congregation but to all Missionary Societies, and all mission territories. It was His Excellency who inaugurated the Missionary Plan of Cooperation which has been adopted by many archdioceses and dioceses, and which procures both spiritual and financial assistance for the missionaries, enabling them to extend the reign of our dear Lord all over the world.

Though we deeply feel the loss of our good Bishop, the thought that he will be rewarded for his apostolic labors and great zeal for the salvation of souls consoles us. We recommend His Excellency to the prayers of all our friends and readers.

To the Priests, Sisters, and laity of the diocese of Trenton, as well as to the Bishop's relatives and friends, the White Sisters extend their most sincere sympathy.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE



Women at the Well

The Gospel is always actual. The eternal word does not grow old; the oracle of Christ resounds in all countries: "Go teach all Nations! Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass." St. Matt. XXIV-35.

* * *

One must admit, however, that the Gospel scenes are afar off. If Jesus came back to earth He would not recognize the scenery of His Palestine. And one can easily understand the anachronism of a little girl: "A Pharmacist and a Republican went up to the temple to pray."

* * *

Islamism has kept stable the people it has touched. It seems to have petrified them in the degree of civilization they possessed. The fervent Mohammedan lives outside the scope of actual evolution. In the oriental framework of North Africa, the Mohammedan keeps with his customs, his attitudes, and his gestures an aspect of another age; and in this frame, many Gospel and even patriarchal scenes are reproduced.

How many times these souvenirs come to enlighten and supernaturalize the simple sights of every day life!

Does not this haughty SIDI, majestically draped in the folds of his long burnoose, recall the proud Pharisees who, in the days of yore, slyly spied the Master?

In the Mountain paths of Kabylia under

After Two Thousand Years!

the shade of the dark foliage of the olive trees - contemporaneous perhaps with those of Gethsemane - I crossed Samaritan women coming from the well with their jugs of water on their heads or backs. Alas! these did not meet with Jesus there.

Have I not met, more than once, a good shepherd carrying on his shoulders the lost sheep, or with crook in hand lead his fold of one hundred sheep across the plain?

Better still, does not this woman with head veiled holding her babe bound in swaddling clothes recall the Virgin Mother with fine profile and olive complexion such as portrayed by St. Jerome?

I would like to have the power of animating these Gospel scenes; and by comparing with them the every day life of our Arabs, make better known this people, so far from the Redeemer by faith, yet so near by their customs, their manners and their language (of the same root as the Syro-Chaldean spoken in the time of Our Lord).

* * *

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee . . . to Bethlehem . . . with Mary his espoused wife . . ." St. Luke II-4-5.

The Gospel says no more leaving full liberty to our personal interpretations, based on the customs of the country. The little ass, that tradition gives for mounting to the August Travellers, must have surely been with them; for they are rare, even among

the poor, who possess none. It finds its lodging under the family roof and eats the dry grass along the road. How often have I thought of Mary and Joseph in crossing a modest couple on the sunny road or under the shade of the palm or olive trees! Nevertheless, among the Mohammedans it is the man who rides the animal while the woman follows on foot. But among the converts the scene is similar to that of the Gospel story. The young woman is seated on the ass; while her husband leads the way.

* * *

"There was no room for them in the inn."

St. Luke II-7.

"There was no room in the inn"; therefore, Joseph took Mary under shelter in a stable near by. A December Oriental evening being rather chilly, a few sticks, gathered here and there by St. Joseph, were put into the hearth - a hole in the earthen floor - where traces of ashes indicated the passage of visitors the day before. The supper, no doubt, consisted of unleavened bread brought from Nazareth and some dried dates.

* * *

"And she brought forth her first born son and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes."

St. Luke II-7.

Not having any bed, chair, nor table, did you ever ask yourself how the young Mother managed to wrap her new-born babe in the swaddling clothes? Would it be wanting in respect towards the Virgin Mother to imagine her sitting on the floor swaddling her Divine Son on her lap? That is how, simply and graciously, the young mammas of the Sahara do. The little hands, the rosy feet disappear underneath the swaddling-band; then the infant is firmly attached with a string made of camel's hair.

"The Bambino" that is venerated in Italy does not differ in this from the infant Arab.

* * *

"You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

St. Luke II-12.

The ox and ass are not mentioned in the Gospel, but tradition holds so well to them that I cannot refrain from recalling the resemblance of a living crib which I saw constituted in Kabylia.

The Kabyle "Gourbi" of earth or stone has but the ground floor. In certain homes, however, the part reserved for the people is elevated from that destined for the stable. Thus the heads of the animals arrive on a level with the family lodging. One day I actually saw an ox and an ass advance their big heads one on each side of a young mother who watched her baby in swaddling clothes lying at her feet. Was it not the scene of a living crib?

May your prayers advance the hour wherein the Arabs will embrace and keep the doctrines of the Redeemer of mankind as much as they have kept to the manners and customs of His country.

Sr. George Marie, W. S.



A Good Shepherd

Our Lady of Fatima at Toro

WE WERE EXPECTING the Statue to arrive at Toro on a Friday and leave the following Monday, thus giving us three full days; so extensive plans were made accordingly. However, little by little these plans had to be altered and considerably abridged, as the probable length of the visit was continually diminishing; because other smaller surrounding missions were clamoring for a passing visit or even just a halt.

One of the White Fathers composed a hymn of welcome in Lutoro for the occasion and after High Mass on the Sunday preceding the great day there was a general singing lesson in church, with a Missionary conducting from the pulpit. The people certainly gave their voices so that there was plenty of volume. Father had to try to moderate the enthusiasm of some of the old folks, whose out-of-tune voices could be distinctly heard above the rest.

The best kind of prep-

aration began some weeks in advance. Crowds were flocking to Confession; and during the week immediately preceding the arrival of her statue, Our Lady was working miracles of grace. The Missionaries were in the confessionals daily; and among the penitents, there were some who had not been to the Sacraments for a number of years. Assistance at daily Mass continued to increase as well as the numbers receiving Holy Communion.



At last the final arrangements were announced, and we heard the Statue would arrive early on Saturday afternoon, and would leave on Sunday afternoon after Benediction, so our three full days dwindled down to one. On Saturday morning, as had been arranged, all the men of the mission went to meet the car bringing the Statue. The Sisters with the women and children went to church at noon and waited. Shortly afterwards, the car arrived

(Please turn to
page 13)

Our Wishes

When our wishes reach our readers the old year will have passed out, leaving joyful and sorrowful memories, reminding us that time passes with astonishing rapidity and convincing us the more of the emptiness of all that does not tend toward God and our sanctification.

On the threshold of the New Year our fervent prayers ascend to Our Lady of Africa imploring happiness, prosperity, and peace for our Benefactors, Guild Promoters and Members, and for all our Subscribers. We are confident that Our Lady will be propitious to our demand for she, like her divine Son, will not allow herself to be outdone in generosity. Is it not due to your spiritual as well as financial assistance that her Missionaries have been able to make known and loved her divine Son and extended His Kingdom in Africa? What could be more pleasing to our sweet heavenly Mother? Surely then, she will hear our prayers that you may have a Happy New Year filled to the overflowing with choicest blessings and graces.



CHRISTMAS JOYS



WITH EACH SUCCEEDING YEAR, Christmas becomes more impressive in Mossiland. Already on Christmas eve, hundreds of catechumens having arrived at the end of their probation, await the regenerating water to enter the service of the King of Love.

It is a magnificent sight to see them in their long tunics forming groups which make white circles, from the Communion Rail to the door of the church.

While the touching and significant ceremonies are performed, they remain motionless, their arms crossed, their eyes lowered, speaking only to say: they renounce satan, they believe in Jesus Christ.

The preparatory rites having come to a close, the Missionary Father asks: "Wilt thou be baptized?"

"I will."

The first ebony head bows to allow the water to flow over it; then, in like manner, one after the other the heads incline. What an afflux of Divine Life!

When the hundreds of catechumens have become as many neophytes, the Bishop enters the sanctuary to make of them soldiers of Christ. In these souls whitened and strengthened by the Holy Ghost, Jesus, the Bread of Life will come; for at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated for them, the newly-made Christians receive their First Holy Communion.

It is all very simple; yet, how grandiose! At eleven P. M. our whole Catholic population prepares for the mystery of the night. But for such a feast, the church is much too small. An Altar is erected at the entrance; and it is there in the open air, in the presence of a silent and recollected multitude, that the Christ Babe descends on earth.

A throng of pagans surround the Christians and with awe and respect keep watch. If of the thousands of Sacred Hosts distributed at the midnight Mass, none are for them; nevertheless, has not Jesus begun the work of conversion in many of their souls?

Pray that more glory will be rendered to the King of peace by those upon whom He seems to have opened His reservoir of grace.

Sr. Mary Paul.



A Babe in Swaddling Clothes

THE WHITE SISTERS care for the destitute and abandoned, but among them are not the lepers the most to be pitied? Yet how numerous they are in Africa. We have six leper settlements in our missions: one at Bamako, French West Africa, three in Belgian Congo at Kasongo, Jomba, and Lulena, and two in British East Africa at Mua, and Minga. In these settlements there are over a thousand patients. But these are just a small number of those stricken with this dreadful disease.

Thousands of lepers come to the dispensaries and in territories, where they are not sequestered, they are taken care of with the other patients.

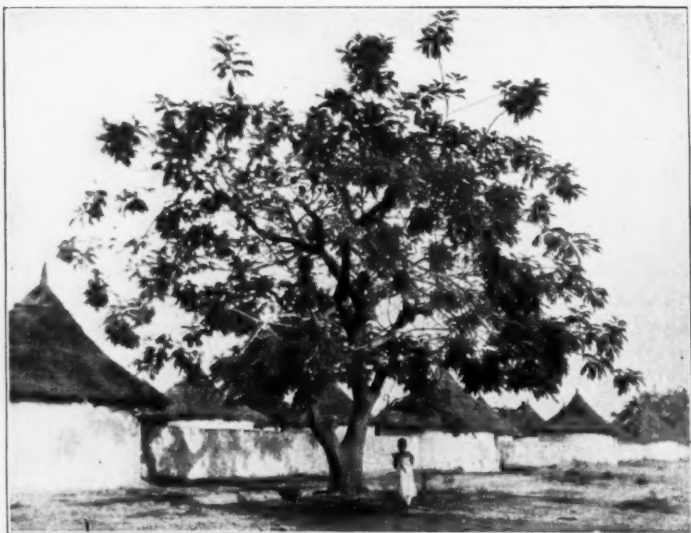
The dispensaries, where the lepers come to be nursed, were first established by the White Fathers to relieve all physical miseries. Then the French, Belgian, and British governments became interested in their respective colonies.

The League of Nations, deeply moved by the ravages of leprosy, encouraged the World Powers to organize centers to ferret out and study this terrible scourge. In France the Colonial Department planned several sanitary units for this purpose;

Our Work Am

Bamako is one of them. Starting in June 1931, the two Sisters, who had been devoting themselves to the service of these unfortunate ones, were now employed full-time at the Bamako Laboratory, visiting the lepers at home and at the Djikoroni Colony, which was located about two miles from Bamako.

Following the Colonial Exhibit of 1931 in Paris a Committee of Doctors, Administrators, etc., studied the question anew and the establishment of an Institute for Leprosy



A Leper Settlement



Some P

among the Lepers

was decided. It was only in October 1934 that the Sisters definitely made their home in the midst of the poor lepers, who were very happy to receive them. They fully understood that the Sisters came to help them and to do all in their power to improve their condition.

In the Belgian Congo the leper settlements are planned as agricultural villages. The government gives the land and builds the huts. The heavy work of plowing is done

by healthy workers and the lepers are free to cultivate what they want which is what they can.

Some kind of a mutual help system is established in each camp under the supervision of the Sisters to organize the work and the preparation of food.

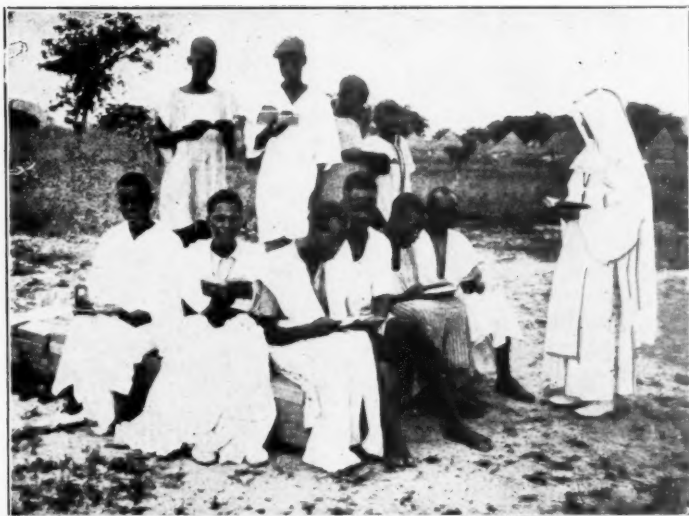
The leper settlement at Mua was established by the Missionaries and was not recognized by the British Government until 1929. The Sisters have the direction of it. This settlement is a real village with a lovely little church of its own, where an annual retreat is preached to the Catholics. It has its own school, as well. Each family has a field and a small banana plantation. They are helped and encouraged to make their own pottery, mats and baskets. The same good work is being carried on at Minga.

The lepers for the most part were treated with oil or ether of Chaulmoogra, which gave good results. However, during the war it was impossible to obtain a sufficient quantity of this from India; but Gorli, a plant of the same family which is cultivated in French West Africa was used. In September 1948, the Chief of Staff at the Institute of Bamako, presented a report to the

(Please turn the page)



Some Patients



Learning About God

Our Work Among the Lepers (Continued)

Congress on Leprosy held in New York. He especially mentioned the improvement in the treatment of Leprosy brought about by the discovery of Gorli.

Experience is proving that results from Gorli are practically the same as those obtained through Chaulmoogra. Two per cent of the patients treated depart apparently cured. This percentage would be much higher if the lepers came to the settlements when the first symptoms of the disease appeared. Unfortunately the patients come only after the dreaded disease has been making ravages for several years. Seventy-five per cent of the patients treated are declared improved after a year.

A special school of Nursing is connected with the Bamako Institute. Those who train there become qualified sanitary health agents to seek the lepers living in the bush and nurse them.

Children born of lepers will contract the disease sooner or later. About fifty per cent of them are stricken before their twelfth year, but treated immediately the disease is checked. A baby six months old, who already had the first spot, was cured for its first birthday.

The foremost aim pursued by our Sisters at the settlements, as well as in the dispensaries, is to study and find the medical treatment that will help to improve, if not cure, the health condition of their poor patients. It is also the principal end the Sisters have in mind when treating the lepers in their villages or in refuges grouping a few huts for the disowned persons who have been chased away from their homes by this disease.

However, it is impossible for a Missionary to separate the need to relieve physical infirmities from that of rendering more bearable the moral pangs accompanying this dreaded disease, which renders one an outcast from society. But what beautiful souls are found hidden under this miserable ex-



Taking Care of Lepers at a Dispensary

terior. Some were Catholics before they contracted the disease and were obliged to isolation. What a comfort our religion is to them in their trial. The example of the Catholics is an encouragement for those who are not. Few of the patients die without the consolations of our Holy Faith.

One of our Sisters wrote from Belgian Congo:

"Yesterday we had a very touching ceremony: the Baptism of three of our lepers. Sometime ago they asked to be instructed in our holy religion. All three were hopelessly advanced cases. We wished to make the day as bright and happy as possible; so a Saturday was chosen. One of the rooms of the settlement was decorated for the occasion; even in front of the door there were beautiful tall palm branches and flowers. On the table inside, lighted candles and bouquets gave a joyous aspect. The three Godfathers, also lepers, looked very dignified as they stood dressed in white during the ceremony. It was most impressive to see the lepers kneeling and rising very piously.

"Father Thomas, a native priest, performed the rite, and he, too, was radiant with joy while pouring the water and saying: 'Gregori, I baptize thee in the name of the Father . . . ' The second one became Josefu and the third Stefano.

"After making these poor outcasts of society, children of the one good and true God, Father Thomas enrolled them in the scapular and then presented each one with a medal and rosary. The Godfathers also had a present for their respective Godson: a beautiful colored picture of our suffering Savior. You can not imagine how the Africans are fond of colored pictures.

"A little treat was prepared for the neophytes and their friends, which made them pass a most enjoyable afternoon. But what rejoiced them most was the realization that they were now children of God, and they almost forgot they were lepers.

"The next morning, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated at the settlement and these elect souls received their God

into their hearts for the first time. I was quite touched in hearing them pray with so much devotion and very much consoled in thinking they would now suffer with greater courage in waiting the day of Eternal Bliss."



Brave Little Mary

A widow with her only daughter, Mary, who was six years old, lived in a village of the Beni-Aissi tribe among the Mohammedans. By means of hard work and economy, the young mother managed to buy a goat which was led to pasture by the child.

One day Mary passed near the TAJMAIT (meeting place for the men to talk business) where a group of Mohammedans were assembled. One of them stopped the child and said:

"You are going to say the CHAADA (Mohammedan prayer)."

"Never!" replied the little one, trying to run away.

"Say with me there is but one God and Mohammed is His prophet," insisted the Mohammedan.

Mary was silent. Another man came near and drawing his sword from his belt said:

"CHAAD, CHAAD, or I will cut your neck."

"Kill me if you like; I love Jesus Christ, not Mohammed."

The Mohammedan, seeing he was conquered by this weak little girl, got very angry and spit in her face. This insult was worse for little Mary than the threats of death. She began to cry; finally she escaped and ran home.

Later, when she was asked if she were not afraid when she saw they wanted to kill her, she answered:

"Yes, I was very much frightened, but I prayed to Our Blessed Mother, and the man hid his knife."

May the faith and confidence of this little Kayble girl teach us to beseech our Heavenly Mother in the trials of life.

CHRISTMAS AT BAMAKO



IT IS DIFFICULT to believe it is Christmas at the sight of the beautiful blue sky, the trees in bloom and the roses climbing along the walls. However, it is Christmas, but Christmas in the Sudan.

From diverse quarters may be heard the sound of tom-toms while the bells peal forth their first and vibrant appeal for the midnight Mass. We leave for Church. The climate is mild, almost warm; it reminds us of a summer evening in the United States.

Around the church are Negroes of all races and religions, who are eager to see, to hear and to grasp something of the mystery of Christmas. The Christ Child will come, and with His divine look, will choose the simple and steady souls able to answer the call of His divine love. Let us hope this Christmas eve shall be for many the first step towards conversion.

We enter the church. It is at its best. There are no costly ornaments but nature has provided us with beautiful flowers and plants; in a corner amongst the trees, the crib has been set up.

A humble crib it is, that of our cathedral; however, nothing is missing, the donkey, the ox, the shepherds and the angels; and in the interior are St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother awaiting the coming of the Infant Jesus.

The Natives in their best attire crowd the church. It is a beautiful sight to see them take their places and in great respect and silence form a guard of honor to the little King who will soon come. "Hail Divine Messiah," the throng sing with all their hearts while the altar boys precede the sacristan who places the statue of the Infant Jesus in the crib.

Midnight . . . Whilst the clock strikes twelve, a Christmas hymn is sung by the Congregation; then the Holy Sacrifice begins.

The younger children sing the Introit, and the Natives participate in the divine sacrifice of the Mass not only through their loud singing, but especially by receiving holy Communion; a moment so ardently desired by each one when he may offer his love to the Divine Infant.

After Mass the crowds retire slowly and silently. We stay with some Negroes for a second Mass. A little girl five years old, frail and delicate, leaves her mamma and on tip-toe approaches the crib where the Infant Jesus is sleeping; she stays in front of Him. What does she ask Him? Of what is she thinking?

The second Mass being over we retire; a few Negroes are still in church praying fervently. Christmas day is very peaceful and filled with happiness. The pagans say: "It is the feast of the Christians."

A touching ceremony ends the day, several catechumens receive the medal of the Blessed Virgin.

Many letters have been placed at the school crib by the children. How will the Infant Jesus answer His little friends. It is the secret of His love.

Thus ends the feast of Christmas. It seems that at this hour Jesus and the Missionary are having an exchange; the latter is offering to the Divine Master the fruit of his long and patient work and Jesus is giving to His apostle the joy of having led these souls to Him and the hope of a fruitful Apostolate.

Sr. M. Berchmans, W. S.

Letters Placed at the Crib

The Infant Jesus will forgive us for publishing a few of the children's letters. They are translated as they were found.

Dear Jesus,

My Jesus, I ask you for nothing but the different graces. I ask you above all the grace of good health. I ask you baby Jesus to be good in school, to do my home work well. I ask you not to get punished at school, and to always get A for conduct and work. I ask you to say my prayers well and to do all Sister tells me. I ask you not to steal any more mangoes from the Mango-tree, to obey.

Maurice Weddraugo

* * *

O Jesus my Savior,

I ask you many graces. I know my dear Savior you will grant me all these I ask. Give me a great grace to become a priest to be your servant. I also ask you graces for my family. I want clothes and shoes. I shall not grumble. I want to correct myself of this fault to please you. I want a bicycle, my Savior, I hope my God shall give me all. Jesus, you will love me in heaven.

Your poor creature,

Gabriel Koulibaly.

* * *

My dear Little Jesus,

Jesus what I ask of you is very big. I ask you wisdom, intelligence and the grace to spend a holy feast day, soon I shall be under the protection of our Good Mother. If I receive the medal, I promise to offer a bouquet of flowers each morning, one we cannot touch, it will be doing my work well. I ask you to come into my parents' hearts also my companions who do not know you and the true religion. Jesus, I want you to come into my heart.

Lanine.

Dear Jesus, Our Lord,

My dear Jesus, I beg of you to help and give me baptism so that I may receive you in my heart. Help me to be good because we must be good to be baptized. I ask you to make of my soul your stable. I will try to have it white when you come, so that it will be nicer than the stable where you were born. Lord help me to be a good Christian from childhood until old age. Help me now and at the hour of my death, Amen.

I thank you very much, I love you with all my heart on earth until I go to Heaven.

Bounkougou (catechumen).

* * *

To Jesus through Mary

My God I love You.

Little Jesus, I am not worthy of Thee but say a word and my soul shall be healed; I ask you Baptism so that I may be a good Christian; I ask you that all the pagans and Mohammedans be saved, my father, my mother, my brothers, my sister, all the pagans. I ask you also that I obey Sister. I am poor; I have no nice clothes for the feast days, but you do not look at the clothes but to the hearts.

Kindly accept your little child who loves you dearly.

Dyanko (catechumen).

OBITUARY

Rev. George Dumas, Spencer, Mass.

Rev. Mother Mary Fidelis Krieter, Commissary General of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Milwaukee, Wis.

Mr. Charles Pierce, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.
Mrs. Elizabeth Baker, Guild Member, Jersey City, N. J.

Mr. James F. Rooney, Jersey City, N. J.

Mrs. Wm. J. Lane, Lowell, Mass.

Mr. Reutherman, Belleville, Ill.

Miss L. Bouget, Lawrence, Mass.

Mr. George R. Van Namee, New York City, N. Y.

Mrs. Margaret Callaghan, Jersey City, N. J.

Mr. James Fitzgerald, Kearny, N. J.

CHRISTMAS at an Orphanage

— By a White Sister

THE BELL OF THE ORPHANAGE rings out to announce the gladsome tidings of the birth of our Savior.

Our thoughts go back to our native land: Christmas carols, midnight Mass, devout worshippers overcrowding a brightly lighted church and the smiling Infant lying in a manger and holding out His little arms as if to draw all mankind to Himself.

How far away we are and how different Christmas is in a Mohammedan country! The White Sister closes her eyes and thinks of Africa as she dreams of a bright future for the greater glory of God: The Natives have heard the glad tidings of the bells and they are streaming down from the hills to carry their humble gifts to the new-born Savior: those from the plains signal their approach by the shrill music of their fifes. The cultured class, the marabouts, the better off classes with saddles and bridles, the desert peoples, mounted on camels, have all heard the Angels message to the shepherds; and throwing off the yoke of Islam, they have come to adore Jesus, the Son of God.

The vision fades away to give place to the reality; and here as at Bethlehem, there are few adorers. The slaves of the Koran pass by indifferent to our divine mysteries, which they are not willing to know.

Ring out Christmas Bells and announce to all Africa the touching mystery of a God Savior and echoing the thought of a Missionary send up to heaven a vibrant prayer imploring another Epiphany.

* * *

Midnight! In the Chapel the little girls, Kabyles, Arabs, and Soudanese, all of whom

are Catholics or catechumens, are gathered around the manger and Jesus is smiling lovingly at them.

"Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will." The African children's voices repeat the Angel's song while they hear Mass with particular devotion and offer the shelter of their innocent hearts to Jesus, who, on the first Christmas, had no better home than a poor stable in Bethlehem.

After Mass the traditional midnight lunch is served and the children go back to bed to dream of the Christmas tree and a little present which they hope to receive after High Mass.

What would our little friends in America think of our Christmas tree? Would it appear to them the marvelous vision that it is for the orphans? There are no electric lights, no gorgeous tinsel ornaments. However, nothing more beautiful could be conceived by our little ones who now encircle the tree, wondering which of the brightly colored gifts on it will be theirs. There are little dresses, candies wrapped in shiny paper, little dolls and beautiful pictures. They cannot believe their eyes.

Little Paula, the youngest of the children, is gazing spell-bound at all these wonderful things, Sister takes a doll and places it in her arms. While the happy little girl presses her treasure to her heart, the distribution continues; and soon, thanks to maternal intuition, each one possesses that which she most desired.

You will not be surprised, dear Benefactors, if I add, immediately afterwards, the voices of the little orphans uniting in a sweet concert rise to God in fervent prayer, recommending to His goodness those who procured for them so much happiness.



FROM OUR SISTERS' LETTERS

LUBWE, EQUATORIAL AFRICA

There is a considerable amount of good to be accomplished here in our mission, and we are only a few to do it. My principal apostolic work is teaching but I am also sacristan and a native Sister helps me. That is why I am so grateful when your parcels arrive and I find something for the church. This week I would like to mend the red vestments; everything is wearing out. Shall I have enough silk to do so properly? We are greatly enriched by your pretty satin remnant. It is a most valuable gift for the missions; for us such a prize is rarely seen. We have already made two beautiful vestments with it. The tabernacle veils and confessional stoles were also very much appreciated and the children of Mary were delighted with the blue scarfs. To the generous benefactors our sincere thanks and the assurance of our most fervent prayers.

As there are no tailors, we must take care of the Missionaries and I have my part in this work. Then too, there are the visits to the native villages, the preparation of the children for their first Holy Communion, and the adults for Baptism.

I am happier than I can express and I cannot thank God enough for having chosen me for His Missionary.

Sister John de Capistran.

BOBO, SUDAN

We have received a small "heaven sent" package of shoe-making supplies; we had completely run out of them. As there are no shoemakers in this part of the country, we must mend our own shoes. It is for this reason that we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your precious gift, which we shared with our sisters in Nasso. You very kindly provided us with small and medium size nails, but allow me to tell you that we have no large ones. Since we cannot obtain any leather here we use the rubber from old tires, always a little heavy. Therefore, some larger nails would be very useful.

Recently, we had a beautiful ceremony of adult baptisms: young people of the workshop of apprenticeship and many of the older boys and girls of our 350 pupils.

Every year a cerebro-spinal epidemic rages in these lands; it claims many lives in the villages. Here we have a few isolated cases and we lost the most beautiful flower of our small black garden: a young Samo girl from Toma — on whom the mission counted for the future and whom we thought would be the first native Sister of her village. Her cousin, a charming baby of a few months, followed her to paradise. Do not forget the needs of our mission in your good prayers.

Sister Mary John.

Our Lady of Fatima at Toro

(Concluded from page 4)

bringing the Statue, our Bishop and two Oblate Fathers who were touring Africa with the Statue. Four girls belonging to the Legion of Mary carried the Statue; and as they entered the church the people began to sing most enthusiastically KOWE, KOWE, KOWE, MARIA (Welcome, welcome, welcome, Mary).

Then one of the Fathers went to the pulpit and very vividly told the story of Fatima, as a Mutoro would tell it, with all the gestures and expressions of a native. Benediction and hymns followed; and at the end of the service, Father Superior told the congregation to come back at 4:30 P.M. for the Rosary, sermon and more hymns. Some of the people left the church but the majority of them remained and the boy scouts, who made a cordon around our Lady's Statue, were kept busy touching rosaries to it.

During the night one of the side doors of the church was left opened for a privileged few — White Fathers, Brothers, African Sisters and White Sisters.

On Sunday morning the High Mass was celebrated by His Excellency after which the crowds remained to pray. In the afternoon the Statue was carried in procession around the grounds and then after Benediction taken away to the next mission while the crowds sorrowfully bid farewell to the Pilgrim Virgin.

SR. MARY BRENDAN.

Dear White People, Our Friends,

Salamu nyingi (many greetings). Receive our letter to thank you very, very much for the gifts you sent us.

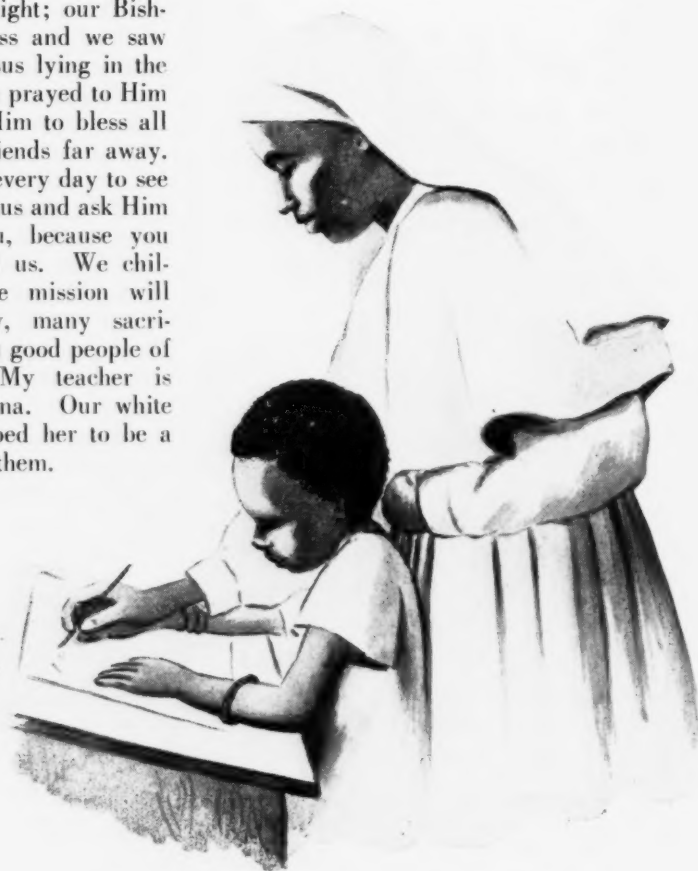
We of here are very well; what news there in America?

Je! (an exclamation fervently used in the native language) *Mama* (Sister) she told us that America is very far, but the people who live there are very good. That's the reason my teacher is helping me to write this letter. *Mama* told us you gave many, many, many cents to buy food and some new clothes for us children of the mission.

Je! ashante sana, sana (thank you very, very much).

On Christmas Day we did eat rice and meat, even *mandasi* (native cake). *Je! mandasi* is good.

We went to church on Christmas Night; our Bishop sang Mass and we saw the little Jesus lying in the manger. We prayed to Him and asked Him to bless all our good friends far away. We will go every day to see the Baby Jesus and ask Him to help you, because you have helped us. We children of the mission will make many, many sacrifices for you good people of America. My teacher is *Mama Justina*. Our white *Mamas* helped her to be a *mama* like them.



I have no more words now. *Mungu awalinde* (God protect you).

Sisi watoto wenu wa Africa
(We your children of Africa)

